The Slough and East Berkshire
C. of E.
Multi Academy Trust
Colnbrook C. of E. Primary School

Home Visit Policy

Owner:	Headteacher
Date Reviewed:	March 2025
Date Policy to be reviewed:	March 2027

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

Our Vision Statement

At Colnbrook we want to grow young people who believe in themselves so they are confident and courageous and not discouraged from their path. They are resilient when faced with challenge. We want our pupils to believe in each other and to feel supported; never alone on their journey.

Our pupils will have the strength of character to set themselves aspirational goals in learning and life. They will achieve their best and create their own inspirational story and memories.

These values are at the heart of everything we do here at Colnbrook Church of England Primary School. They reflect the qualities that staff and governors want the children to develop and display in all that they do.

Aspiration, Resilience, Respect, Responsibility, Community, Compassion.

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that staff, parents/carers and pupils understand:

- When and why our school conducts home visits
- How our school conducts home visits safely and effectively
- What we do after we've conducted a home visit

If there are any concerns about a pupil's safety or wellbeing during a visit, appropriate action will be taken in line with our child protection and safeguarding policy

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy takes into account the responsibilities laid out in:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Children missing education
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school

It also reflects general health and safety legislation.

3. Definitions

A home visit is a visit that requires member(s) of staff to visit a family's address and /or enter the home of a family home. There are different types of home visit:

- A procedural visit, e.g. to drop off work when a pupil is unable to attend school
- A safe and well check (or welfare check), e.g. if a pupil is absent without good reason and the school has concerns about their welfare
- A visit that member(s) of staff will undertake before a child begins attending school, to get to know them and their family

The use of the term 'parent' in this policy will be taken to refer to the parent, carer or other legal guardian of a pupil on roll or due to join the school's roll.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Authorising any home visits, along with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) when the visit has a safeguarding focus
- Responding to any issues or concerns raised by parents about home visits

4.2 Senior staff, including the headteacher and DSL, where appropriate
All senior staff, including the headteacher and DSL (where appropriate), are responsible for:

- Sharing this policy so staff know why, when and how to conduct a home visit
- Training staff in the school home visit procedures and conduct
- Overseeing risk assessments
- Deciding which members of staff should attend a home visit
- Not allowing any visits which place staff at risk
- If pupils/children are judged to be at risk: making sure staff follow school's safeguarding procedures

4.3 Staff
Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of and following this policy
- Following the correct procedures before, during and after a home visit, including reporting and recording any safeguarding issues
- Taking reasonable steps to ensure their own safety
- Informing the school of their movements and time of return

4.4 Parents
Parents are responsible for:

- Communicating any issues or concerns about a home visit to the headteacher

5. Reasons for home visits

School staff may conduct a home visit to:

1. Build positive relationships with pupils and their parents. This could include:
    - A visit before the child begins at the school to establish positive relationships, meet family members and discuss the individual needs of the child
    - When families aren't engaging in other forms of contact
    - To work with and support parents to develop strategies to improve a pupil's attendance

2. Ensure we are fulfilling our safeguarding responsibilities, including:
    - To make a safe and well check (this may happen in conjunction with the local authority social care team), including where the school has concerns about a pupil's absence, and / or parents cannot be contacted by phone
    - To investigate and support parents when a pupil is refusing to come into school

3. Other procedural reasons:
    - When a pupil is being educated at home, including to drop off or collect work
    - To visit a pupil who has been off school for a period of time, e.g. due to a medical issue, so they don't feel isolated from the school community

These are examples of reasons home visits may be completed; however, they are not an exhaustive list.

6. Procedures

6.1 Before the visit
Staff will:

- Familiarise themselves with the contents of this policy
- Ensure that a home visit is necessary. If possible and/or practical, arrange for the parent to come into the school
- Be clear about the purpose of their visit

- Be aware of any relevant background information, including who lives at the address and any safeguarding information, by checking with the Attendance Officer and with the DSL if necessary
- Be aware of the contents of the school's home visit risk assessment and any specific concerns relating to the family home that is due to be visited.
- **For EYFS visits**: Arrange the first visit at a time when a parent and child will be home, and before the child begins school. **For other visits**: attempt to contact the parent before visiting by telephone if possible.
- **If contacting a parent before a visit:** Use the call to give the parent an opportunity to ask questions about the visit, confirm the home address and proposed length of visit
- Log any home visits planned with the office staff, with times and venues
- Arrange visits in pairs, wherever possible. Solo visits may be permissible for example when completing a welfare check if there is a lack of available staff, but staff attending alone should not enter the property
- Familiarise themselves with the address they'll be visiting, including any transport or parking arrangements
- Ensure they have a charged mobile phone to take on the visit

6.2 During the visit

Staff will:

- Be on time as agreed in advance with the parent, and ask the school office to contact the parent if they're running late
- Dress appropriately and act in a professional manner at all times
- Identify themselves and show their identification badge
- Check with the parent that they understand the purpose of the visit, or inform the parent of the reason for the visit if unable to pre-arrange the visit via telephone
- Only enter the premises when invited in by a responsible adult. If no responsible adult with parental responsibility for the child is present, the staff member(s) will return to school and attempt a visit at another time. Staff should not enter the property if visiting alone
- Staff must not enter the child's bedroom, or the upstairs of the property alone
- If the visit is to address concerns about the pupil, only discuss this with adults with day-to-day responsibility for the child
- Request that all animals in the home should be kept in a separate room, and cancel the visit if the responsible adult refuses, or is unable to adhere to the request
- Behave with respect in the home, respecting the culture and customs of the family, and only using areas of the property with permission
- Explain to parents that their mobile phone will be on throughout the visit
- Take notes for ease of recording the content of the visit afterwards, and explain to the parent that the notes will only be shared with the relevant senior leaders via CPOMS
- Leave the property immediately if they feel uncomfortable, or at any risk
- Consider the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures at all times, and call 999 if they feel a child is in immediate danger
- For EYFS visits prior to the child starting school:
    - Spend time with the parent and the child
    - Ask pre-prepared questions that aim to build a relationship with the family and aid the child's transition into school

6.3 In the event an incident does occur

Staff will:

- Contact emergency services on 999 if they feel themselves or someone else is in immediate danger
- Terminate the visit and leave the property immediately in order to reach a place of safety
- Once in a place of safety, inform the headteacher and any other appropriate members of staff (e.g. the DSL) of the incident to agree appropriate next steps and obtain support
- Record full details of the visit as soon as possible after the incident

6.4 After the visit

Staff will:

- Write up the outcome of the visit on CPOMS and securely file any notes made during the visit
- Report any concerns, including safeguarding incidents to the DSL or deputy DSL, immediately
- Only discuss individual home visits with other staff members where relevant and/or necessary

6.5 Safeguarding

- Any safeguarding concerns identified during the visit will be shared with the DSL immediately, in accordance with our child protection and safeguarding policy, or the relevant local authorities if the child isn't yet a pupil at the school
- Any allegations made against a member of staff making a home visit will be dealt with in accordance with our allegations against staff policy, located within the Safeguarding policy. Staff should be mindful of conduct and perceptions of their conduct during a home visit e.g. not visiting a child's bedroom alone

7. Monitoring arrangements

In monitoring this policy:

- The headteacher will review this policy every 2 years, or as appropriate if changes are required
- The policy will be approved by the local governing board at each review

8. Links with other policies

This home visit policy is linked to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Children missing education (CME) procedures and policies
- Attendance policy
- Allegations against staff policy
- Health and safety policy
- EYFS policy